



2013

# Agitprop

## *Part 6*

### Banners, Flags, Clothing and Stalls



SACP Banner, Cradock 4 Funeral, July 20, 1985. © Gille de Vlieg



**SACP Banner, Cradock 4 Funeral, July 20, 1985. © Gille de Vlieg**  
*Gille de Vlieg would like to hear from anyone who is in this or any of her other photographs. She is on Facebook, or e-mail at [gille@mweb.co.za](mailto:gille@mweb.co.za)*

## Banners and Flags

The above image is of the display of an SACP banner at the funeral of the Cradock 4 martyrs Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mhlauli in 1985.

This is a most powerful and actual image of a communist party legalising itself. Before this, communist party insignia were hardly ever seen in South Africa. The Party had been banned in May, 1950. But within less than five years after the Cradock 4 funeral, the Party was not only *de facto*, but officially legal again. That was in February, 1990.

Here is an edited version of e-mail correspondence with the photographer, Gille de Vlieg, who very kindly responded to a request to send a suitable version of her image of the SACP Banner being displayed at the Cradock 4 Funeral, 20 July 1985:

**(Communist University):** “Your image will be good to show the power of photography for a start, and then the use of the banner. Not least is to remind people of the Cradock 4. Also the fact that to an extent SACP unbanned itself, legalised itself, and this funeral of the Cradock 4 was the emphatic moment when they "came out", and you were there, taking the pictures. Less than 5 years later, the SACP was officially legalised again after 40 years of banning. This is a very important point to make in my opinion, because there are people who mistakenly glamorise underground politics. I want to show evidence that the struggle of the clandestine is firstly against being clandestine, and never to make a virtue of it.

**(Gille de Vlieg):** “I was a Black Sash member and was fortunate to meet Matthew Goniwe briefly when he came to address our Conference in March 1985. I remember the Funeral of the Cradock Four very well. Another Black Sash member and I had made a banner for the Black Sash, and as we entered the 'stadium' the youth took our banner and ran around the 'stadium' grounds with it and then put it up next to the SACP banner. On the SABC news that night the 2 banners were shown over and over.

“I also remember driving back through the night and hearing that a State of Emergency had been declared. I had many friends on the buses that returned from the funeral, and I actually went to John Vorster police station where they had taken the buses and saw people being taken off the buses and searched.

“I agree that the SACP did unban itself at that time. I believe the people who made the banner were Obed Bapela and Maurice Smithers.

“SAHA (SA History Archives) has many of my photographs, their website is [www.saha.org.za](http://www.saha.org.za) and their physical address is in the Womens' Jail on Constitution Hill. It is rather ironic for me because I spent a time in detention just across the road from there in Hillbrow Police Station in 1986. I'm happy for you to have a low res of the image for the reasons you outlined. I am also happy for you to link it to my email address [\[gille@mweb.co.za\]](mailto:gille@mweb.co.za).

Gille de Vlieg is also on Facebook. She has particularly requested that any people who recognise themselves in her photographs contact her. She would love to hear from you.



SACP & Black Sash banners, Cradock 4 Funeral, 20 July 20 1985. © Gille de Vlieg

### More about the clandestine

The struggle to cease being clandestine, and to become legal, does not end when formal legality is achieved. The struggle to be out and to be openly proclaiming who we are, whether as SACP, as ANC or as COSATU unions, or as any other mass organisation, continues against different kinds of opposition.

These include the bourgeois mass media, such as for example eTV and eNCA, and print media, most of which strive at all times to show the unorganised as the normal, silent majority that they speak for. At the same time, they represent the organised people – those with collective agency – as not having agency, or otherwise just ignore the Movement and do not report its actions at all.

This conflict is at the heart of the question of Agitprop. It is the reason why Agitprop is constantly necessary. The organised masses face a constant counter-Agitprop, which is better funded and, in some media, but not in all, more extensive than our own.

Then there is the extent to which the movement mistakenly removes itself from the public realm. This happens when we say that the movement's business must not be done in public. But in fact the movement's business is supposed to be done in public. What we have to guard against is not exposure, but manipulation by selective exposure combined with selective concealment, distortion and lies. The best defence against all of these is openness.

## **Your Branch Banner and Flags**

Usually branches get their banners made for them, and pay.

The banner is likely to be any branch's first big purchase. It needs to be looked after carefully and kept ready for use.



**SACP Flag**

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The SACP Constitution begins:

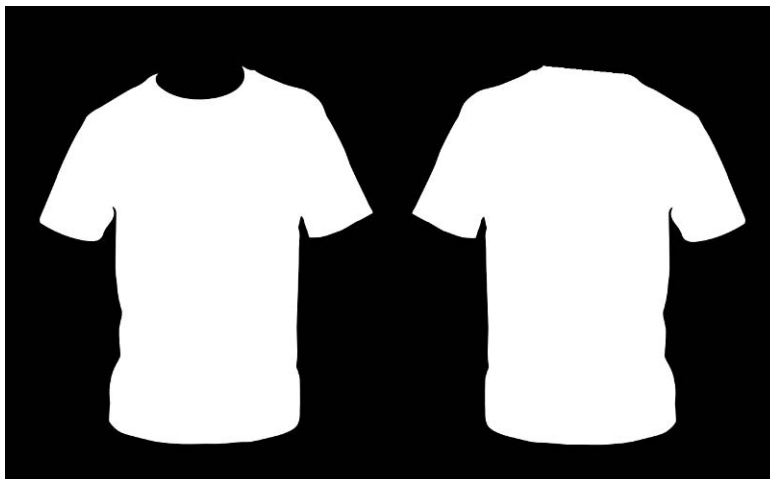
### **1. NAME**

The name of the organisation shall be the South African Communist Party (SACP).

### **2. SYMBOL AND FLAG**

**The symbol of the SACP shall be a black star containing a gold hammer and sickle. The flag of the SACP shall be red with the symbol placed in the top left-hand corner.**

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**T-Shirt Blanks**

## **Clothing and Caps**

You can design your own T-shirt by putting colours, graphics and slogans on to the blanks, above. You can do it in the “Paint” programme that is part of Windows.

Caps are even easier to design. A cap needs to be specified as to its colour and a badge, or a slogan, or both (e.g. badge in front and slogan at the back).

Most people would contract out the printing of the T-shirts these days. Silk-screening your own T-shirts is still possible, but rarely done.

Can you make money from T-shirts and caps? It is not likely. Given that your main aim is political, namely agitational propaganda (Agitprop), it follows that if you are also trying to make money then you are trying to do two things which do not correspond. Serving two masters is a recipe for failure in any field.

It is better to maximise the political benefit, and to try to recover the costs in an all-round way.

Therefore, by all means do sell, but also try to get your clothing project funded in other ways, for example by outright donations and by “crowd funding”.

The discussion about T-shirts and caps could extend out to include other kinds of merchandise such as literature, and other kinds of clothing such as track suits and sweat-shirts. A full discussion of the business of merchandise would have to be extensive and to include long-term accounting for all “overhead” expenses, plus stocktaking and the writing-off of damaged and unsaleable goods.

Such a discussion will quickly become over-elaborate for our purposes, because at this level, we never have the means to sustain such activities as businesses over

time. So we will not do that. But in the next item, we will consider what it is to run a stall as a one-off, occasional activity, and not primarily as a serious money-making affair.

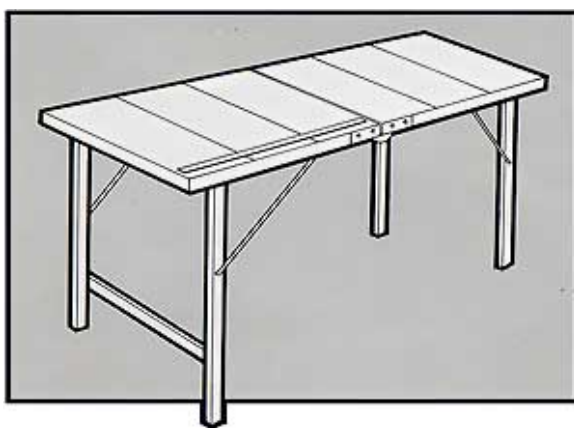
In the Induction course, we have said that the secret of funding Party and mass movement activities is to make them all generate a small surplus as they go along.

Now, we are saying that the apparently money-making activity is no different. Like all our activities, it has to, taken overall, generate a small surplus, including from funding and from outright donations taken.

The distinction between political activities that also attract money, and money-making activities that carry a political message, is found to be no distinction at all. For us, the political intention is the governing intention.

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### **Agitprop, Part 6b**



Paste Table

## **Stalls**

You can use a folding paste-table like the one in the drawing above, and set it up in the street, or in a mall, or in a hall at an event or a conference or meeting. Or you can use any other kind of table, for that matter, to create what is called in a general way, a “stall”.

It is as well to think of the purpose of your stall as being to serve the cause, rather than to have an objective of making a big lump of money. Of course you must pass any surplus to your Treasurer and you must account in some satisfactory way to your Treasurer for all the receipts and payments of funds, and for the stock of goods, which must also be properly conserved. You should, as with all Party or mass-movement activities, strive to generate a surplus, and not to carry debts back into the organisation.

It should be your intention to put on a good show, and to give a good experience to anyone who might come to your stall. You should therefore try to become aware of what such people might expect to find. Experience will in due course make you aware of what this is. People will in fact tell you what they want.

They may want to make a cash contribution to the Party, and you should be open to that, and ready to process it, with a receipt book, for example. They may want to join the party, so you should have application forms and be ready to follow a correct and effective procedure.

People may want current literature of the SACP, ANC or Trade Union, such as its Constitution, or documents like the South African Road to Socialism, the Manuals and the Election Manifestos of the ANC, and even documents like the National Development Plan or the Constitution of South Africa. You will not be able to keep all of these, but you may be able to bring some of them. A good principle is to bring whatever you can get of such things to your stall.

Not everything on the stall will have a cover price or a tariff price, but you can ask for donations.

Clothing and merchandise has been mentioned in the previous item. As we have said, the main thing is not to lose money, but to give a political experience to the masses, and to do whatever business may be appropriate to the political aims of the organisation.

Standing behind your stall, you become the public face of your organisation. You become a public representative of what your organisation stands for.

As such it becomes clear that what you are doing is no more or less than Agitprop. You do it with different means, but the aim is the same. It is part of the mission to educate, organise and mobilise.

Finally, it relates back to what was said in the beginning of this part, about the Party legalising itself. The open, public relationship that the SACP has with the South African public is deliberately kept up by all these means, and including stalls of the kind described here.

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**Course: Agitprop**

**25063, Banners, Flags, Clothing and Stalls, 2013**

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